MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL AND HIS WORLD

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MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL AND HIS WORLD

EDITED BY

YOSEF KAPLAN, HENRY MÉCHOULAN
AND RICHARD H. POPKIN

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INTRODUCTION

RICHARD H. POPKIN

The conference on "Menasseh ben Israel and his world" grew out of a discussion at the Dutch Jewish History conference in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in December 1982. Professor Daniel Swetchinski of the University of Arizona had presented a paper on Menasseh ben Israel which was very controversial and which aroused and stimulated much scholarly response. We felt that in view of the many new findings about Menasseh and his relations with various Christian and Jewish figures in Holland, England, Sweden, France and elsewhere, we ought to try to arrange a conference just about Menasseh and his world in order to re-evaluate the picture given of his various contributions. Many letters had been found in new sources, new details about his role in the history of Hebrew printing, in explicating Jewish doctrines, in interpreting Jewish messianism, in the Christian millenarian worlds in Holland and England, in his relation with Dutch philo-Semitic Christians and English chiliasts.

If we could bring together people working on different aspects of Menasseh's thought and activities, we might be better able to assess his special role in seventeenth-century Jewish and Christian activities. Professors Jonathan Israel, Henry Méchoulan, Yosef Kaplan, David Katz and I discussed the possibilities of a conference, and I broached the matter with Professor Yehuda Elkana, the director of the Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation. He readily agreed to provide the finances and the facilities, if we would provide the program. A committee of Méchoulan, Kaplan, Katz and myself drew up a list of possible participants from Europe, America and Israel, including experts in European intellectual, political and economic history, and experts on various aspects of Jewish history, especially of the Sephardic world of the seventeenth century. The generosity of the Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation enabled us to bring together a quite diverse group of scholars who were able to present Menasseh in his many worlds, as a popular Jewish preacher and publisher, as a point of contact for the Jewish and Christian worlds, especially in Holland and England, as an intriguing actor in the messianic and millenarian dramas of the time, and as a thinker in his own right.

We discussed Menasseh ben Israel in terms of Portuguese expectations,

Scottish millenarianism, various Dutch movements, various English thinkers and politicians, in terms of the Jewish context of his works, and in terms of his influences. Most of the papers were available before the meetings, so that more time was available for discussion. We moved at a leisurely pace, so that we could discuss issues formally at regular sessions, and informally in smaller groups. The discussions were lively, often forceful and dramatic, and very often very informative. Unfortunately we could not capture them to include in this volume, but some are reflected in the final versions of the papers. Some strong differences of opinion and interpretation were advanced, which reflect different perspectives, and different evaluations of the materials.

At the end of the conference an editorial committee was appointed to publish the proceedings of the conference, consisting of two Israeli scholars, Amos Funkenstein of Tel Aviv University and Yosef Kaplan of the Hebrew University, and Henry Méchoulan and myself representing Europe and America. We received all of the papers here included. Three of the participants, Mordecai Feingold, James Jacob and Gérard Nahon, did not submit their papers for publication.

It was felt that we would not try to make the papers conform in mode or style, and would publish them as prepared by the authors, except for minor editorial changes. The result, we feel, gives a broad picture of the emerging picture of Menasseh ben Israel as a significant figure in seventeenth-century intellectual, political and economic affairs, and will lead to better appreciating what he was trying to accomplish and what he did accomplish.

A further by-product has been the forging of new research programs by sub-groups of the participants. Two of the Dutch participants, Professor Jan van den Berg and Dr. Ernestine G.E. van der Wall, have edited a collection of papers and documents on Jewish-Christian relations in Holland and England in the seventeenth century (which has just appeared in International Archives of the History of Ideas Series, published by Kluwer); a conference on seventeenth-century millenarianism took place in Wolfenbüttel in September 1987, and a conference on Menasseh's English acquaintance, Henry More, took place at Christ's College, Cambridge right afterwards. Yosef Kaplan and I are starting to prepare a collective volume on the Sephardic community of Amsterdam. New documents about Menasseh are being published by Dr. E. van der Wall, Dr. A.K. Offenberg, Prof. David Katz and myself (including Menasseh's previously unknown writing on the kabbalah). A new edition of Menasseh's *The Hope of Israel* has just been published by Henry Méchoulan and Gérard Nahon (with an essay on the translator, Moses Wall, by myself).

Hopefully, all of this will lead to a realization that no matter how

strange, or unusual his activities were, from a traditional Jewish perspective, he did play a major role in seventeenth-century European (and even American) history. The ongoing effects of this conference on Menasseh ben Israel will be of importance to scholars of seventeenth century Jewish and Christian history.

We are most grateful to the Van Leer Jerusalem Foundation, to Professor Yehuda Elkana and his excellent staff, and to the Institute for the History and Philosophy of Sciences and Ideas at Tel Aviv University, for making the conference possible, for their hospitality. We also want to express our appreciation to E.J. Brill Publishers, and their editor, Elisabeth Erdman-Visser, for their willingness to publish the proceedings of the conference.

PETRUS SERRARIUS AND MENASSEH BEN ISRAEL: CHRISTIAN MILLENARIANISM AND JEWISH MESSIANISM IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY AMSTERDAM

ERNESTINE G.E. VAN DER WALL

It is a well-known fact that the famous Amsterdam Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel (1604-1657) maintained various friendly relationships with non-Jewish contemporaries. Whenever the circle of Menasseh's friends is described, one never fails to pay attention to his personal contacts with renowned Christian scholars such as Gerardus Johannes Vossius, Caspar Barlaeus, Hugo Grotius, Claudius Salmasius, and other men of the so-called "Republic of Letters", showing the great reputation the Jewish Rabbi enjoyed in the learned non-Jewish world. Furthermore, the names of various members of the international Christian millenarian circle are always present, such as those of the British theologians John Dury, Henry Jessey and Nathaniel Homes, the Silesian Boehmist Abraham von Franckenberg, the Portuguese Jesuit Antonio de Vieira, the Bohemian visionary Paul Felgenhauer, and the Amsterdam theologian Petrus Serrarius. Serrarius is one of the lesser known figures among Menasseh's friends. In Cecil Roth's biography on Menasseh his name is only mentioned in passing[1]. Henry Méchoulan and Gérard Nahon, in the very clear and interesting introduction to their edition of the *Miqweh Israel*, give some attention to Serrarius' place in the world around Menasseh and to his views on the dominant role of the Jews in the messianic scheme[2]. On the whole, however, he has remained one of the more obscure members of the circle around the Rabbi. The present paper may be considered as a further introduction of this millenarian friend of Menasseh ben Israel.

Petrus Serrarius (Serarius) was born on 11 May 1600 in London. He de-

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[1] Cecil Roth, *A Life of Menasseh ben Israel, Rabbi, Printer, and Diplomat* (Philadelphia, 1934), p. 154. In Lucien Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission to Oliver Cromwell* (London, 1901), Serrarius is not mentioned. See also H.-J. Schoeps, *Philosemitismus im Barock* (Tübingen, 1952), pp. 51, 52.

[2] Henri Méchoulan et Gérard Nahon (Introd., trad. et notes par —), *Menasseh ben Israel. Espérance d'Israel* (Paris, 1979), pp. 55, 56, 59, 60.

scended from a well-to-do Walloon merchant family (by name of Serrurier) that had fled its country because of the persecutions under the Duke of Alva and had settled in London. The families of Menasseh ben Israel and Serrarius thus shared the same background of flight from the Inquisition, living like exiles in a foreign country, both Menasseh and Serrarius finding their second homeland in the Low Countries. Probably Serrarius spent the greater part of his youth in his native country, studying at Oxford from 1617 till 1619.

In 1620 he left England for good and went to the Dutch Republic in order to receive his theological training in Leiden. In the period that Menasseh already served the Amsterdam Spanish-Portuguese congregation as a Rabbi, Serrarius was studying theology at the Walloon College, an ecclesiastical institution founded by the Walloon Churches in 1606 to provide for a theological training of its ministers[3]. In 1626 he was appointed minister of the Walloon congregation at Cologne. After nearly two years however, he was deposed from the ministry, the reason being presumably his leaning towards a more mystical theology. It is unknown how he got to know mystical, and especially Boehmist, literature, but his correspondence of the time shows the deep influence of the ideas of the German mystic Jacob Boehme (1575-1624). He then went to study medicine at the University of Groningen, showing great interest in iatrochemistry. In 1630, however, without having finished his medical training, he settled at Amsterdam, the economical, cultural and religious center of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic, where he would live until his death in 1669. In this city, "that bank of conscience, where not one so strange opinion but finds credit and exchange"[4], he had every chance of meeting kindred spirits, moving in the circles of the anti-confessional Collegiants, of Boehmists, mystics and millenarians. Bred in the atmosphere of orthodox Calvinism he gradually developed into a mystic spiritualist and a convinced millenarian. Instead of serving one particular church he preferred to be a "minister of the universal Church"[5].

Unlike Menasseh who already at a young age started to publish learned works and quickly won great fame in Jewish and non-Jewish circles alike, Serrarius only in a later stage of his life became a well-known figure, being

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[3] For the Walloon College and its history, see G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes, *Geschiedenis van het Waalse College te Leiden 1606-1699* (Leiden, 1975). On Serrarius, see E.G.E. van der Wall, *De mystieke chiliast Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) en zijn wereld* (Leiden, 1987). (An English version of this study is in preparation).

[4] See Andrew Marvell, "The Character of Holland", lines 73-74 (quoted by David S. Katz, *Philosemitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655* (Oxford, 1982), note 18, p. 158).

[5] Thus Serrarius called himself on the title-page of his *Examen Synodorum* (Amsterdam, 1668).

a prolific author of theological and millenarian works and also translating writings of a mystical and spiritualistic nature. His first philo-Judaistic millenarian tract appeared in 1657, entitled *Assertion du Règne de Mille Ans*[6]. It was a refutation of an anti-chiliastic work by the well-known French theologian Moyse Amyraut. The *Assertion*, praised for its clear and systematic exposition[7], contained all his fundamental ideas on the future millennium and the important role of the Jews in the millennial scheme. A few years later a conflict arose with the Groningen professor of theology Samuel Maresius, mainly about his notions on the general conversion of the Jews and their glorious restoration in the Holy Land; a *semi-Judaeus* he was called by Maresius[8]. Besides defending his millenarian, philo-Judaistic concepts, he took part in several controversies of his day, for example, in the so-called "Lamb's war", a dispute between the conservative and liberal Mennonites, taking the side of the latter. His mystic spiritualism also came to the fore in his refutation of Louis Meyer's controversial *Philosophia S. Scripturae Interpres*, in which he defended spiritualistic hermeneutics over against the rational cartesianism of Meyer[9].

Among his intimate friends were well-known contemporaries such as John Dury – we will return to him below –, the learned theologian, millenarian, and pedagogue Jan Amos Comenius (Komensky), Bishop of the Bohemian Brethren, and the prominent German mystic spiritualists Friedrich Breckling and Christian Hoburg. Furthermore the mystic alchemist Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont, author of the *Alphabetum Naturale Hebraicum* (1667), the Christian kabbalist Christian Knorr von Rosenroth, famous for his *Kabbala Denudata*, and the Groningen professor of oriental studies Jacobus Alting were connected with the circle of Serrarius' friends. He carried on a regular correspondence with people all over Europe, and especially in his native country. During the years of the upheaval around the messianic movement of Sabbatai Ṣevi and the assembling of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, he was very busy sending reports to England, where Henry Oldenburg, Nathaniel Homes, and Thomas Chappell and others

[6] Full title: *Assertion du Règne de Mille Ans ou de la Prosperité de l'Eglise de Christ en la Terre. Pour servir de responce au Traitté de Monsieur Moyse Amyraut sur ce même sujet. Descouvrant le triste Préjugé qui possède aujourd'huy la pluspart des Eglises contre le règne du Seigneur de toute la Terre. "O Dieu lève toy, juge la Terre, car tu hériteras en toutes les Nations", Psal. 82. v. 8.* (Amsterdam, 1657).

[7] J. Wallmann, *Philipp Jakob Spener und die Anfänge des Pietismus* (Tübingen, 1970), p. 331: "Eine bessere Einführung in die chiliastische Gedankenwelt und eine bessere Zurüstung zur Widerlegung orthodoxer Einwände gibt es zu dieser Zeit wohl nirgendwo".

[8] The controversy with Maresius was partly about Serrarius' astrological notions, see Ernestine G.E. van der Wall, "An Awakening Warning to the Wofull World (1662). Millenarianism and Astrology in Petrus Serrarius", *Ned. Archief voor Kerkgesch.*, LXIV (1984), pp. 196-214.

[9] See Van der Wall, "Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) et l'interprétation de l'Écriture", *Cahiers Spinoza* (Paris, 1984/85), pp. 186-216.

anxiously awaited the latest news. Some of his letters, containing abstracts of letters sent to the Amsterdam Jews from various places, were collected and published as pamphlets at London[10]. The French ex-Jesuit and Walloon minister at Middelburg (Zealand), Jean de Labadie, was also informed by him about king Sabbatai and his prophet, Nathan of Gaza. In view of these events De Labadie wrote his pro-Jewish tract *Jugement Charitable sur l'État Présent des Juifs* (1667), dedicating it to Serrarius and two of his brothers, warmly commending them upon their charitable attitude towards the Jews. On the author's request the *Jugement Charitable* was translated by Serrarius into Dutch[11].

If one might speak of "Christian Sabbateans", then Serrarius may be considered as such, believing that Sabbatai Ṣevi was a precursor of the coming Messiah, teaching the Jews to know the true Messiah. After Sabbatai's conversion to the Islam he supported those Jews who believed that Sabbatai "was not turned Turck, but a Jew as ever in the same hope and expectation as before", being convinced that he would once return to gather the Jews to the Holy Land[12].

From his life and work it is apparent that Serrarius was deeply interested in the Jews. This interest – reflected in is "Sabbateanism" – was one of the dominant facets of his millenarianism. Although his views on the Jews have to be regarded within a conversionist scope, it cannot be denied that he genuinely cared about the Jews. On the one hand his millenarian ideas were the source of his inspiration for his philo-Judaism, on the other hand this positive attitude towards the Jews may in its turn have been largely affected by his personal contacts with a number of Jews. He was a familiar figure in Amsterdam Jewish circles, mainly those of the Sephardim. By one of his contemporaries he was described as "the good Christian friend who lives here in Amsterdam in friendship with the rabbis"[12a]. Unfortunately most of these Jewish friends are unknown to us. Among them, however, was one of the most renowned of seventeenth-century Jews: Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel.

One reason may account for the fact that up till now few words have been devoted to Menasseh and his friendly relations with Serrarius: our infor-

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[10] See Gershom Scholem, *Sabbatai Ṣevi. The Mystical Messiah 1626-1676* (London, 1973), pp. 333-336.

[11] On De Labadie, see W. Goeters, *Die Vorbereitung des Pietismus in der Reformierten Kirche der Niederlande bis zur Labadistischen Krisis 1670* (Leipzig, 1911 [Amsterdam, 1974]), esp. pp. 47-49, 160-161. The Dutch translation is entitled *Oordeel der liefde en gerechtigheyt over de den jegenwoordigen toestandt der Joden* (Amsterdam, 1667).

[12] On Serrarius and his involvement in the Sabbatean movement, see Scholem, *Sabbatai Ṣevi*, pp. 344-346, 356-357, 375, 455, 470, 481, 521, 537, 545, 609, 753-756.

[12a] See Scholem, *Sabbatai Ṣevi*, pp. 334, 335 note 12.

mation concerning their friendship is based on just a few lines in the well-known tract of Paul Felgenhauer, entitled *Bonum Nuncium Israeli* (1655). In his Dedication to the "Hebrew Philosopher and Theologian Menasseh ben Israel", Felgenhauer relates how, in December 1654, he met the rabbi for the first time. This meeting took place at the house of Serrarius, who, as Felgenhauer remarks, was a mutual friend of theirs[13]. A few days later Serrarius and Felgenhauer, in their turn, went to visit Menasseh at his house in order to continue their discussion about the coming of the Messiah, a discussion which they had started during their first meeting. The two millenarians were warmly received by the rabbi, and returned later on once more to his house. So far Felgenhauer, from whose relation it may be inferred that Menasseh and Serrarius were rather intimately befriended, visiting each other regularly.

Their discussions, held together with Felgenhauer, resulted in the latter's *Good News to Israel*, which in February 1655 came from the press. This small volume contained also a letter of Menasseh in answer to Felgenhauer's tract, and, moreover, some letters written to the rabbi by millenarian correspondents, among whom were Von Franckenberg, Homes and Jessey[14]. So this volume was made in close cooperation between Menasseh and the Bohemian chiliast. Two months later Menasseh published his famous messianic writing, the *Piedra gloriosa o de la estatua de Nebuchadnesar*, in which he expressed his belief in the imminence of the Fifth Monarchy, the messianic kingdom. When writing this treatise, undoubtedly the discussions with Serrarius and Felgenhauer were still vivid to his mind[15].

Felgenhauer's account, then, is our only source of information about the personal contacts between Menasseh and Serrarius. It is unknown when and how they met each other. It is possible that they got acquainted through their common world of business, that of booksellers and printers.

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[13] Paul Felgenhauer, *Bonum Nuncium Israeli quod offertur populo Israel et Iudae in hisce temporibus novissimis de Messiah quod scilicet redemptio israelis, ab omnibus iniquitatibus suis, et liberatio a captivitate, et adventus messiae gloriosus jam nunc proxime instent . . . a quodam Christiano, qui adventum Messiae cum Iudaeis exspectat . . .* , 1655, in "Dedicatio ad Virum Clarissimum, Philosophum et Theologum Hebraeum Manasse ben Israel . . .": "non plures elapsi sunt dies, quando Reverentiam tuam prima facie viderim, in hospitio dilecti nostri PETRI SERARII, amici, ubi primus noster sermo erat de MESSIAH, quamquam brevissimus: Postea concludebamus, Petrus ille noster et ego Paulus, ut pro placito R.T. Te conveniremus in aedibus . . .". See also Roth, *A Life*, pp. 154-156; H.-J. Schoeps, *Philosemitismus*, pp. 18-45.

[14] Felgenhauer, *Bonum Nuncium*, pp. 89-103. Besides the letters of Homes and Jessey, those of the Silesian Boehmist Abraham von Franckenberg, the German Johann Möchinger and the French theologian Isaac La Peyrère are published in this section. Menasseh presented, not without some pride, copies of this volume to visitors, such as the Swiss Johann Zollikoffer, a friend of Johan Buxtorf the younger, see Roth, *A Life*, pp. 156, 165.

[15] The *Piedra gloriosa* is famous for its four engravings by Rembrandt.

As we know, besides being a rabbi of the Spanish-Portuguese congregation, Menasseh was also a printer and a bookseller. Among his business associates were Christian printers and booksellers such as Henricus Laurentius and Johannes Janssonius[16]. In 1636 it was the latter who published an edition of Menasseh's *De Creatione Problemata XXX*, a tract that gave rise to a fiery dispute because of the song of praise by Caspar Barlaeus that preceded the work[17]. It may have been Serrarius who read the proofs of this edition: since the beginning of the 1630s he worked as a proof reader at an Amsterdam publishing house, which to all probability was that of Janssonius. So Serrarius may have met the rabbi here for the first time.

It is, however, also likely that they were introduced to each other by one of their mutual friends. Serrarius and Menasseh had several friends in common, both Jews and non-Jews. As regards the latter, some of them belonged, like Serrarius himself, to the small circle of philo-Judaists that came into existence around the middle of the seventeenth century. It was their desire to help to bring about the general conversion of the Jews by showing them love and charity, hoping that in this way the Jews would eventually be led to the fountain of all love, Christ.

Some of those millenarian philo-Judaists were not only in personal contact with Menasseh, but they were also befriended by Serrarius. First of all John Dury should be mentioned. Since the 1640s he was acquainted with the Amsterdam rabbi and corresponded with him about the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, thus initiating the active political campaign for the readmission of the Jews to England[18]. Dury was an intimate friend of Serrarius. In the early 1620s both studied theology at the Walloon College in Leiden. Throughout their lives they kept close contact with each other, carrying on a regular correspondence in which their common interest, the conversion of the Jews, was a recurrent theme. During his many travels throughout Europe, negotiating for the union of the Protestant churches, Dury often enjoyed Serrarius' hospitality when staying in Amsterdam. Presumably they sometimes went to visit Menasseh together.

The names of the prominent philo-Judaists Henry Jessey and Nathaniel Homes have already been mentioned: Menasseh proudly published their letters in the *Bonum Nuncium Israeli* as proof of the fact that the kingdom of

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[16] See, *inter alia*, L. and R. Fuks, "Hebreeuwse boekdrukkunst in Nederland", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, XIV (1980), pp. 191-204, esp. p. 195.

[17] See F.F. Blok, "Caspar Barlaeus en de Joden. De geschiedenis van een epigram", *Ned. Archief voor Kerkgesch.*, LVII (1977), pp. 179-210.

[18] For Dury (1596-1680) and his relations with Menasseh, see Roth, *A Life*, pp. 181-184; S. Katz, *Philo-Semitism and the Readmission of the Jews to England 1603-1655* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 87, 144, 156, 160, 216-219; Van der Wall, "Three Letters by Menasseh ben Israel to John Durie. English Philo-Judaism and the 'Spes Israelis'", *Ned. Archief voor Kerkgesch.*, LXV (1985), pp. 46-63.

Israel was beginning to be preached throughout the whole world; this was considered by both Felgenhauer and Menasseh to be a sign of the Messiah's advent. Homes and Jessey also corresponded with Serrarius[19]. The London Baptist minister and Saturday-Sabbatarian Henry Jessey, who signed his letters as "one that longs to see Jerusalem made a praise in the Earth", became known for his activities in the readmission campaign for the Jews to England. He was the man behind the scenes of the Whitehall Conference, held on this issue in December 1655[20]. Together with Dury, he was involved in the collection for the poor Jews in Palestine, that was organized by Serrarius in the 1650s[21].

Besides their close cooperation for the benefit of the Jews, Serrarius also translated some of Jessey's works into Dutch. Thus, in 1653, he published a Dutch translation of Jessey's philo-Judaistic millenarian treatise *The Glory of Jehudah and Israel* (1650). This translation, entitled *De Heerlickheydt en Heyl van Jehuda en Israel*, soon became known in Jewish and non-Jewish circles alike. Menasseh read it, mentioning this writing both in his answer to Felgenhauer and in his *Humble Addresses*. Pointing out to Cromwell the nobility of the Jews – as one of the reasons why they should be admitted to settle in England –, he referred to the book of "that worthy Christian Minister Mr. *Henry Jessey*, (1653 in Duch)", in which this point "hath been most worthily and excellently shewed and described"[22].

Maybe he was also somewhat flattered by the preface to this tract: Jessey, dedicating his work to the distressed Jews in general and to the Spanish-Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam in particular, related that he was a great admirer of Rabbi Menasseh's learned works. Upon hearing that this famous author was still alive, living in Amsterdam, he had started to correspond with him. This correspondence had occasioned the publication of this treatise: he had written it in consolation for the distressed Jews, showing them that once they would be restored to a glorious state, while expressing his hope that the time would be near when ten men out of all nations would take hold of the skirt of a Jews, saying: "We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you" (Zechariah 8:23). One may

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[19] See, *inter alia*, Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 33, 99, 104, 105, 107. For the relations of Serrarius with Jessey and Homes, see Van der Wall, "The Amsterdam Millenarian Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) and the Anglo-Dutch Circle of Philo-Judaists", in J. van den Berg and E.G.E. van der Wall (eds.), *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century. Studies and Documents* (Dordrecht, 1988), pp. 73-94.

[20] See Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 103, 104.

[21] See Richard H. Popkin, "Rabbi Nathan Shapira's visit to Amsterdam in 1657", in J. Michman and T. Levie (eds.), *Dutch Jewish History*, Jerusalem 1984, pp. 185-205. See also Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, p. 214.

[22] See Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission*, p. 103. The Dutch translation is entitled *De Heerlickheydt en Heyl van Jehuda en Israel*.

safely assume that Menasseh not only knew the Dutch translation but the Dutch translator as well.

Like Jessey the learned theologian and millenarian Nathaniel Homes ("Chiliastorum Achilles") was deeply interested in Jewish matters. He corresponded with Menasseh to know the rabbi's opinion on various subjects. Homes published several influential millenarian works, most of which were present in Serrarius' library. In the 1660s, when rumors out of the Near East concerning the appearance of a "king of the Jews" and his "prophet" reached Europe, he eagerly awaited Serrarius' letters on this subject.

So Dury, Jessey and Homes were all in personal contact with both Menasseh and Serrarius. Besides these philo-Judaists – to which Felgenhauer also has to be reckoned – there were more men belonging to the circle of their mutual friends, such as the learned Hebraist Adam Boreel and the German theologian and alchemist Johannes Moriaen. In December 1645 Boreel, a good friend of both Serrarius and Dury, settled in Amsterdam in order to devote his time to Hebrew studies. The following year he published a Hebrew edition of the Mishna, that was printed by Menasseh who also wrote a preface to it[23]. Another Jew was also involved in this edition: Rabbi Jacob Judah Leon (Templo), who provided the vowel points and a preface of his own. It is highly likely that through Boreel Serrarius got acquainted with this rabbi, who became renowned for his models of Solomon's temple, writing a successful tract on this subject, a Hebrew version of which was present in Serrarius' library[24]. In the 1650s Boreel stayed in England for some time and was involved there in Menasseh's negotiations about the resettlement of the Jews.

Furthermore the unfamiliar but interesting figure of the German Johannes Moriaen should be mentioned here[25]. Moriaen had been a Lutheran minister before settling in Amsterdam where he devoted his time, among other things, to alchemistical experiments. He was intimately befriended by Serrarius, Dury, Boreel, and Menasseh. From his extensive correspondence with Samuel Hartlib, the "Great Intelligencer" and the stimulating figure of the so-called Hartlib circle, as well as from Me-

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[23] See Roth, *A Life*, pp. 81, 82; Richard H. Popkin, "Some Aspects of Jewish-Christian Interchanges in Holland and England", in Van den Berg and Van der Wall (eds.), *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, pp. 3-32.

[24] On Rabbi Jacob Judah Leon (1603-1675), see *Enc. Jud.* 15, pp. 998, 999; G.H. Turnbull, *Hartlib, Dury and Comenius. Gleanings from Hartlib's Papers (HDC)* (London, 1947), pp. 258, 262; Méchoulan et Nahon, *Espérance d'Israel*, pp. 87, 88. A Latin version of Judah Leon's tract was owned by Spinoza.

[25] On Johannes Moriaen, see M. Blekastad (Hrsg.), *Unbekannte Briefe des Comenius und seiner Freunde 1641-1661* (Kastellaun, 1976), pp. 9, 10, 125-150 (publication of nine letters by Moriaen).

nasseh's own letters it is apparent that he was a good friend of the rabbi. It was Moriaen who cared for the transmission of Menasseh's *Miqweh Israel* to England, an affair which at first was not altogether successful[26]. He served as an intermediary between Menasseh and Hartlib, once replying to his English friend that Menasseh could not answer Hartlib's letter himself because the rabbi was too busy preparing his sermon for the next day.

There is a possibility that Serrarius met the French theologian and millenarian Isaac La Peyrère while the latter visited Amsterdam in 1655. Felgenhauer might have introduced him to La Peyrère, whose *Du Rappel des Juifs*, anonymously published in 1643, was present in Serrarius' library. Menasseh, who also may have got acquainted with him during this Amsterdam stay, was greatly inspired by his work and he praised the author highly in his own writings. However, La Peyrère's very controversial *Prae-Adamitae* (printed in Amsterdam in 1655 and also owned by Serraius) was refuted by Menasseh as well as Felgenhauer[27].

Their common circle of friends did also include a number of Jews, such as the Portuguese physician Isaac de Rocamora. To all probability Serrarius got acquainted with Rocamora – a former Dominican priest and as such confessor to Infanta Maria, afterwards Empress of Austria – through the medium of Menasseh, who was intimately befriended by this physician and introduced him with some pride to his non-Jewish acquaintances[28]. After Menasseh's death, especially during the years of the Sabbatean movement, Serrarius and Rocamora kept in regular contact[29].

Furthermore, one of Menasseh's pupils, the young philosopher and lens grinder Baruch de Spinoza should be mentioned. After his separation from the Jewish community in July 1656, Spinoza moved for some time in the circle of the anti-confessional Collegiants, to which – as we have seen – Serrarius also belonged, so they probably met there for the first time. It may very well have been Serrarius who, in 1657, introduced him to the Quakers, and, in particular, to their leader William Ames, by whom Serrarius was befriended at the time. Spinoza translated some conversionist Quaker pamphlets into Hebrew, among which Margaret Fell's letter to Menasseh ben Israel. In later years Serrarius cared for the transmission of Spinoza's manuscripts and letters to their common friend Henry Ol-

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[26] See his letter to Hartlib, dated 7 October 1650, in Blekastad, *Unbekannte Briefe*, p. 148.

[27] On Isaac La Peyrère (1596-1676) and Menasseh, see R.H. Popkin, "Menasseh ben Israel and Isaac de la Peyrère" (Part I), *Studia Rosenthaliana*, VIII (1974), pp. 59-63; (Part II), *Studia Rosenthaliana*, XVIII (1984), pp. 12-20, 27. See also Popkin, "The Marrano Theology of Isaac de la Peyrère", *Studi Internazionali di Filosofia*, V (1973), pp. 97-126.

[28] On Isaac de Rocamora (±1600-1684), see Roth, *A Life*, pp. 120-122, who calls him "the most extraordinary, if not the most profound of Menasseh's physician friends".

[29] On the contacts between Rocamora and Serrarius in the 1660s, see Scholem, *Sabbatai Ṣevi*, p. 345.

denburg, secretary to the Royal Society. From the Oldenburg correspondence it is apparent that the millenarian and the philosopher saw each other regularly during those years. Oldenburg also knew Menasseh whom he had met during the latter's stay in London at Boreel's lodgings[30].

Finally, the name of the rich Jewish merchant Abraham Pereyra should be mentioned here. He was one of the founders of the *yesibah* at Amsterdam, of which Menasseh was the principal. Pereyra, a devout man and author of edifying literature, was an enthusiastic adherent of Sabbatai Ṣevi: in March 1666 he left Amsterdam for the Holy Land to attend the establishment of the messianic kingdom by this "King of the Jews". Undoubtedly Serrarius knew this follower of Sabbatai, who occupied the leading place among the small group of Amsterdam Sabbateans that clinged to its belief in the "King of Israel"[31].

Dury, Homes, Jessey, Felgenhauer, Boreel, Moriaen, Hartlib, Oldenburg, Rocamora, Spinoza, Pereyra: these names show that Menasseh and Serrarius moved – largely – in the same circle of friends. But there was more that created a common bond: both of them lived in great eschatological expectation, awaiting the Fifth Monarchy, the glorious restoration of the entire Jewish nation, in the near future. We know that Menasseh was deeply interested in the ideas of such millenarians as La Peyrère, Johann Möchinger, and Antonio de Vieira, and so he will also have listened attentively to Serrarius whose ideas concerning Christ's intermediate advent, the restoration of the kingdom in Israel and the Christian attitude towards the Jews were of a similar kind[32].

Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel and the millenarian Petrus Serrarius may be regarded as exponents of the climate of eschatological expectation that made itself felt among Jews and Christians during the middle decades of the seventeenth century. Since the 1640s in various Jewish and Christian circles a deep hope had sprung up that great events would occur in the near future. Lurianic kabbalah, which became a dominant factor in Jewish life about 1630-1640, created a fertile soil for messianic expectations. It was believed that the final redemption was at hand. The hope for *tikkun*, restoration, was widespread. Similarly, Christian millenarianism flourished

[30] See Popkin, "Spinoza and the Conversion of the Jews", in C. de Deugd (ed.), *Spinoza's Political and Theological Thought* (Amsterdam, 1984), pp. 171-183; *idem*, "Spinoza, the Quakers and the Millenarians, 1656-1658", *Manuscrito*, VI (1984), pp. 113-133; Van der Wall, "Petrus Serrarius (1600-1669) et l'interprétation de l'Écriture".

[31] See Méchoulan et Nahon, *Espérance d'Israel*, p. 51; Scholem, *Sabbatai Ṣevi*, pp. 358, 529-530.

[32] On Antonio de Vieira (1608-1680), see A.J. Saraiva, "Antonio Vieira, Menasseh ben Israel et le Cinquième Empire", *Studia Rosenthaliana*, VI (1972), pp. 25-57. On Johann Möchinger (1603-1652), see Roth, *A Life*, pp. 159-160.

around the middle of the seventeenth century, also expecting the messianic age to be immiment. Christ's second coming was at hand, the Jews would be converted to Christianity, and Babylon would receive its judgement.

This atmosphere of expectation was clearly reflected in the debate about the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel that came to life again during this period among both Jews and non-Jews[33]. The legendary issue of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel – which (in 722 B.C.) had been carried away by King Salmanasser and had never returned, believed to be staying in some secret places in the world – received renewed interest by the well-known story of Antonio de Montezinos. In 1644 Montezinos came to Amsterdam to inform the Jews, testifying under oath before Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel "and divers other chiefe men of the Portugall Nation", of his discovery of a remnant of the Lost Ten Tribes in South America. Simultaneously other reports about the appearance of the Ten Tribes reached Jews and Christians, all this creating an atmosphere of excitement.

Menasseh did not immediately express his opinion about Montezinos' story. A few years later, however, in 1649, Dury's query about this story gave occasion to the publication of his *Miqweh Israel*. In this tract the rabbi proved at large, according to his own words, "that the day of the promised Messiah unto us doth draw near"[34], interpreting Montezinos' narrative as an important sign of the coming changes. The discovery of Israelites in South America was proof of the increasing dispersion of Israel, and, as Menasseh pointed out, according to Daniel 12:7 ("And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished"), this general dispersion was a necessary precondition for the final deliverance of the Jews. His tract was immediately successful, being very influential not only during the readmission campaign for the Jews to England, but also a decade later when rumors circulated about the return of the Ten Tribes.

Though the *Miqweh Israel* is not listed in the catalogue of his library, Serrarius undoubtedly knew this work: the issue of the Ten Tribes was of great interest to him, especially during the years 1665 and 1666, as we shall see below. The news about the Ten Tribes was interpreted by him, as by Menasseh, as a sign of the coming messianic kingdom.

It is highly likely that the discussions of Serrarius with Menasseh were

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[33] For a clear survey of the interest in this issue, see Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, ch. 4, pp. 127-158.

[34] See Menasseh to Dury, 23 December 1649, in Wolf, *Menasseh ben Israel's Mission*, p. lxxviii. Copies of the three letters by Menasseh to Dury, written in 1649 and 1650, of which abstracts have been published in Thomas Thorowgood, *Jews in America*, 1650, have been preserved among the Hartlib Papers (Sheffield), see also Van der Wall, "Three Letters by Menasseh ben Israel".

not only reflected in the former's notions about this specific issue of the Ten Tribes but also in his general concepts regarding the future messianic kingdom and the role of the Jews in the millennial drama. On several points there was a close affinity between them. Both of them were convinced that the redemption of the Jews was immiment. Both believed that the entire Jewish nation would be gathered from all ends of the world to return to its ancient homeland. It was their common conviction that the coming of the Messiah was at hand, at which the existing monarchies would be overthrown and the Fifth Monarchy would be established "under the heavens" (Daniel 7:27). It should be remembered that Menasseh published his *Piedra gloriosa* at the time when Serrarius was writing, or just started writing, his *Assertion du Règne de Mille Ans*, in which he also dealt with the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, giving an exposition of the theory of the Four Monarchies and concluding that the Fifth Monarchy was at hand. "The stone cut out of the mountain without hands" growing into "a great mountain" (Daniel 2:34, 35) was interpreted by both as the Messiah – or, according to Serrarius, Christ. They also were of one mind that this messianic kingdom would be inhabited by all pious and just, to whatever religion they belonged. These universalist notions of Menasseh, as well as his ideas on the future messianic state, were known to Serrarius not only from their discussions, but also from the two works by Menasseh that he had in his possession: the *De Resurrectione Mortuorum*, on the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the dead, recommended by Serrarius in one of his own writings; and the *De Fragilitate Humana*, a refutation of the doctrine of predestination.

As to the political elaboration of messianic ideas, Serrarius was hardly interested in assigning important roles to kings, political leaders or entire nations in the messianic drama, like La Peyrère, Vieira, and also Menasseh did. Only once, in 1660, Serrarius showed to give credence to a prophecy concerning the role of King Charles II in furthering the conversion of the Jews. Confessing that in previous years he had only paid a passing heed to this prophecy, however seeing that the prophecy partly came to be fulfilled, namely that Charles II was restored to the throne, he thought it likely that the other part of it, concerning the King and his family being instrumental in the conversion of the Jews, might be fulfilled too. He even went so far as to say that the English Restoration bore "some Shadow and Type of that Great Restitution of the Kingdom in *Israel*"[35]. Serrarius, then, thought along the same lines as Arise Evans, the Royalist millenarian who had several discussions with Menasseh during the latter's

[35] Serrarius to Dury, May 1660, portion of a letter published in an enlarged edition of Thomas Thorowgood, *Jews in America* (London, 1660).

stay in London, trying to persuade the rabbi of his Royalist views. But as Menasseh had fixed his hopes on Cromwell rather than on Charles II, he disagreed with Evans, just as he probably would have done with Serrarius[36]. However, had Menasseh still been alive in 1660, then maybe he would have changed his mind.

There were, of course, more differences of opinion between the Jewish rabbi and the Christian millenarian which were of greater consequence – and of an irreconcilable nature. There was the inevitable question concerning the advent of the Messiah, whether it was His first coming upon earth or His second one. Furthermore, Menasseh would nor could agree with the notion of the general conversion of the Jews.

In the following I will confine myself to dealing with some of Serrarius' views on the Jews in order to show the main facets of his philo-Judaism.

Serrarius' millenarianism was closely connected with his ideas on the restoration of the Jewish people: in the millennial reign the kingdom of Israel would be restored. The second coming of Christ was considered to be of great importance to the restoration of the Jews. In his defense of chiliasm over against orthodox fellow-Christians such as Samuel Maresius, Serrarius maintained that there was an "intermediate" advent of Christ, that is, an advent between His incarnation and His final advent in judgement at the end of days. The concept of an *intermedius adventus* or middle advent, that stemmed from the Joachimist tradition, was used by him within a conversionist scope: Christ's middle advent had to take place in order to save all Israel and to turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Romans 11:26)[37]. If the entire Hebrew nation would be saved, then Christ had to appear before the Last Judgement, because at this Judgement no sinners would be saved, but all would be judged according to their works. Christ's second coming, then, was regarded to be closely connected with the conversion of Israel: without this coming there would be no *restitutio Populi Israelitici*[38].

In addition to various scriptural passages, Serrarius referred to rabbinical literature in which also was spoken of a particular advent of the Messiah that was to be distinguished from His coming after the resurrection of all flesh. It was in this connection that he recommended one of

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[36] On Arise Evans, see Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 121-124, and Popkin, "Menasseh ben Israel and Isaac la Peyrère" (Part II).

[37] On the Joachimist concept of the intermediate advent, see Marjorie Reeves, *Joachim of Fiore and the Prophetic Future* (London, 1976), *passim*. Serrarius owned works by the sixteenth-century humanists Coelius Secundus Curio and Giacopo Brocardo and may have drawn this concept from their writings.

[38] *Apologetica Responsio ad Samuelem Maresium* (Amsterdam, 1663), pp. 20, 21; *De Judaeorum Universali Conversione* . . . (Amsterdam, 1665), pp. 130-137.

Menasseh ben Israel's writings, the *De Resurrectione Mortuorum*, a work that was popular among Christian millenarians of the time[39]. In this work the rabbi maintained that there was a particular resurrection of the just only at the advent of the Messiah, that was to be distinguished from the last and general resurrection. Thus, on this point Menasseh and Serrarius were in perfect agreement, both of them believing in a resurrection of the just at the coming of the Messiah.

As to the question whether the advent of the Messiah they both expected was His first or second coming, the rabbi was, according to Serrarius, struck by blindness, being unaware of the fact that the resurrection of the just had already begun in Christ. Orthodox Christians, however, such as Maresius, might be accused of blindness, too: though acknowledging Christ's first coming, they denied that there would be a resurrection of the just at Christ's second coming. This partial blindness on both Jewish and Christian sides drew from Serrarius the exclamation:

> "O admirandam utrinque Caecitatem, tam inter Christianos, quam Judaeos! *Rabbi Menasse*, inter Judaeos primarius, qui contemporaneam cum adventu Messiae Mortuorum Resurrectionem vere statuit, non videt, in Christo incaeptam jam esse Mortuorum Resurrectionem, adeoque venisse Messiam, cujus tam illustria et luculenta sunt indicia. Et D. *Maresius*, inter Christiani nominis Doctores primarius, qui Christum, tanquam primogenitum ex Mortuis, et primitias resurrectionis, jam diu resurrexisse profitetur; non videt tamen, incaeptam jam esse peculiarem Justorum Resurrectionem, adeoque secuturam quoque totius Massae Justorum similem suo tempore Resurrectionem; sed illam promiscue cum universae Carnis Resurrectione misere confundit . . ."[40].

Thus on the one hand Menasseh served to illustrate the blindness on the part of the Jews regarding Christ and His first coming upon earth, while, on the other hand, Maresius was brought forward as a representative of orthodox Christendom that was prejudiced against Christ's second or middle advent.

The theme of partial blindness on the side of both Jews and Christians played an important role in Serrarius' defense of millenarianism. He saw a kind of analogy between the rejection by the Jews of Christ's first advent and the refusal of the Christians to acknowledge His second coming upon earth. Although the Jews had grossly sinned by rejecting Christ, they were

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[39] *Apol. Resp.*, p. 21, referring to *De Resurrectione Mortuorum* Book III, ch. 2-4. Other millenarians, for example, Nathaniel Homes and the German minister G.L. Seidenbecher, a good friend of Serrarius, also recommended this work by Menasseh on the same grounds, see Van der Wall, "Chiliasmus Sanctus. De toekomstverwachting van Georg Lorenz Seidenbecher (1623-1663)", *Ned. Archief voor Kerkgesch.*, LXIII (1983), pp. 69-88 (esp. p. 80).

[40] *Apol. Resp.*, p. 21. Maresius was not pleased by this comparison: "Transeat odiosa haec comparatio cum caeteris erroribus D. *Serarii* . . .".

right in expecting that He would once govern the world. The Christians, though accepting Christ as the promised Messiah, were in error maintaining that Christ's kingdom would never be established upon earth. To some extent the Jews might even be excused for their blindness: it was rather difficult to know the mystery of the advent of the Messiah as a suffering servant, because the Prophets only spoke of it in rather veiled terms. However, the Christians should know better regarding His coming as a king: the Old and New Testament were full of prophecies concerning this glorious advent[41].

This Jewish and Christian blindness had deep roots: from one's youth upwards one grew up with certain notions to which one held fast, instead of learning the simple truth by the Spirit of the Lord:

> "je dis, que nous tous, tant Chrétiens que Juifs, sommes de nature enclins a nous laisser posséder par les Maximes et Principes que nous avons succé avec le lait de nostre Mère, et desquels nous avons esté imbus et informés des nostre jeunesse; avant que par l'Esprit de Dieu nous en ayons appris la vraye et naifve vérité"[42]

Because of their prejudices the Christians could not admit that the Jews might know a truth that was hidden to themselves. Here Serrarius turned against the traditional anti-millenarian argument according to which millenarianism was disposed of as "Jewish fables" or "Jewish dreams". The fact, however, that the Jews did not yet believe with the Christians in Christ, need not hinder the Christians from believing with the Jews in His future kingdom upon earth: ". . . comme si ce nous seroit une disreputation de croire avec eux l'exaltation du *Règne* du *Messie* en la terre, pource qu'eux ne veulent ou ne peuvent encore croire avec nous son abaissement et ses souffrances en mesme lieu . . ."[43].

As he tried to convert Jews to Christianity, so, in a sense, he sought to "convert" anti- or non-millenarian Christians to millenarianism. From his argument about the partial blindness of both Jews and Christians, or, positively, about Jews and Christians each owning part of the truth, it may be inferred that only millenarians like Serrarius owned the whole truth, acknowledging with the Christians Christ's coming upon earth in humility, and with the Jews the Messiah's advent in glory.

Millenarianism, then, offered the solution to both Jewish and Christian blindness and paved the way to a reconciliation of Jews and Christians. In view of this it is not surprising that Serrarius stressed the fact that both Jews and Christians were now living in the same hope and expectation,

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[41] *Assertion*, p. 130, 133.
[42] *Assertion*, p. 9.
[43] *Assertion*, p. 11.

awaiting the same event: the glorious appearance of the Messiah. There was only one difference (''Il y a seulement cette différence . . .'') concerning the question whether Christ was the promised Messiah. So seemingly the ignorance of the Jews regarding Christ was minimized. However, no opportunity was lost by Serrarius to point out to the Jews that it was this ignorance that had been the cause of their dispersion and of all the tribulations they had had to endure throughout the ages. Moreover, their aversion of Christ was regarded as the one and only barrier to their restoration, thus proving the need of thir conversion to Christ.

Besides the notion of partial blindness, Serrarius also employed the concept of a brotherhood between Jews and Christians. In this his mystic spiritualism played an important part. He was an adherent of the mystic spiritualistic view of history according to which the pure Apostolical Church had fallen into deep decay since the fourth century. Throughout the ages a handful of ''true'' Christians remained, the main part of them however being ''false'' or pseudo-Christians. Against this background one has to place Serrarius' observation that there was a kind of brotherhood between Jews and Christians.

In a dialogue between a ''mourning'' Jew and an ''enlightened'' Christian, published by Serrarius in 1665, this notion of a Jewish-Christian brotherhood was expounded[44]. On calling the Jew his brother, the Jew asked the Christian why he did so. The Christian replied that both Jews and Christians had sinned and that therefore they might be considered as ''brothers in misery'': both of them were in a miserable condition. The Jew however could not understand this argument: were it not the Christians, together with the Turck, who possessed the whole world? was not that bestial Fourth Monarchy entirely theirs? The Jews, however, to whom the whole world had been promised, did not even have a country of their own, let alone a small piece of land: they had to live in various countries like foreigners and criminals. In short, the Jews were the most miserable people upon earth and so it was inappropriate to compare the misery of the Christians with that of the Jews[45].

''Dear Jew'', Serrarius answered, ''of course your misery is very great when compared with what your people owned in former times. But if you would realize what we Christians possessed formerly, then it would soon become apparent that our misery is far greater than yours''. In this connection he dilated on the apostasy of the Christian Church and, stating the

[44] *Een Bleyde Boodschap aan Jerusalem* (''A Happy Message to Jerusalem'') (Amsterdam, 1665).

[45] *Een Bleyde Boodschap*, pp. 9-12.

difference between the Jewish and Christian misery, remarked that the Jews only lost a temporary and external matter, while the Christians lost the internal good itself. The Jews might be mourning over the loss of Jerusalem, the external Temple and their ceremonial religion – these however had to perish some time. But the Christians were mourning over the loss of a spiritual town, an internal temple and an "essential and rational" religion. You lost the shadows of those divine matters, Serrarius said, we lost the essence and truth of it, and so our misery is far greater than yours[46].

His appreciation of the Jewish and Christian religion was defined in terms of mystic spiritualism. In the notions about the external *versus* the internal religion – the first being only of a temporary kind, the shadow of the latter that was eternal and essential – his view on the Jewish religion as such was clearly implied. His criticism, however, was directed to both Jews and Christians: the first had only given attention to outward things, neglecting the inward, the latter had laid all emphasis on inward matters, neglecting the outward posture without which the inward religion would bear no fruit. Thus the Jewish and the Christian religion were regarded as in a sense complementary to each other. It is characteristic of Serrarius' millenarianism that he envisages a universal religion in the millennial reign wherein these two, the external and internal worship, are harmoniously. So in the future millennium one would practice a Judaeo-Christian religion.

In this connection it should be pointed out that his notion of "the hope of Israel" is also determined by his mystic spiritualism. The hope of Israel has two facets: on the one hand it has to be interpreted in an individual sense as the hope of man for his internal and external sanctification, while on the other hand it may be considered as the hope of mankind in general, implying that first there has to be internal sanctity in Israel and that next the whole body of Israel should be externally sanctified, so that their kingdom may become a kingdom of God and their city a city of God in which He truly lives. And, though visible on earth, this will be no earthly kingdom nor an earthly city, but a manifestation of God's heavenly reign upon earth. Now this hope of Israel concerning mankind in general will only be fulfilled when the Jews will have accepted Christ.

It has already been mentioned that the conversion of the Jews was regarded as a necessary precondition for their glorious restoration. It is no surprise then that Serrarius wanted to be instrumental in furthering the conversion of the Jews. The best way to accomplish this was "to gain them

[46] *Een Bleyde Boodschap*, pp. 13-16.

through kindness'': by exercising *practica charitas* he hoped that the Jewish hearts would melt and that they would begin to accept Christ as the true Messiah:

> ''For shall once their Hearts be so convinced, as to say *Hosanna*, blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord (Matthew 23:37). Then indeed they must first have had some lively and most sensible Experience of some Soul-quicking Excellency in those, that came from the Lord; which make them long for any that came in his Name . . .''[47]

Although the Jews would only be converted by the revelation of the true Joseph, Jesus Christ, among them, Serrarius believed that the way to this conversion could be paved by Christian acts of love and charity, as likewise their conversion could be hindered by Christian ill-treatment of the Jews. His conviction that the Jews would be more willing to accept Christ as the true Messiah if His followers would act mercifully towards them inspired him to be an active philo-Judaist, the more so since he did not doubt that the conversion of the Jews was at hand. The signs of the times all pointed to one conclusion: the redemption of the Jews was imminent. The figtree had begun to put forth her leaves, her branch to wax tender. ''Yea truly those natural Branches of that same *Noble Olive tree* (of which *Paul* speakes, *Rom.* 11.) begin to tender, (. . . I speak not of a thing unexperienced) acknowledging themselves to be great sinners, giving glory to God, and justifying him in all his Judgments exercised upon them''[48]. From their penitent attitude one could not but infer that they were preparing themselves to accept the true Messiah.

At what time was it most likely that the conversion of the Jews would happen, Serrarius asked. Would it not be

> ''when they shall least dare promise that thing to themselves? Will they especially then expect it, when they are broken with the sense of their unworthiness, whether haply the Lord, the God of their Fathers will vouchsafe of his meer Grace and Mercy, to remember them? Let whoso will war against them, they will take no Arms against no man. If any man smite them, they bear it. If any drive them from place to place, they give place, and fly away, as the chased Fawns of the Hind upon the mountains. (. . .) If any will kill them with the sword, or burn them in the fire (as in *Lusitania* is often done) or attempt to bury them alive in pits (as not many years since was done in *Polonia*) they have nothing wherewith they oppose, or defend themselves, but Prayers to God . . . pleasing themselves after a sort, in the punishment of their sins; hoping in this, that the measure their punishments, and chastisements will at length be fulfilled, that God may again have mercy upon them''[49].

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[47] Serrarius to Dury, 20 May 1660, in Kennett, *A Register*, p. 138.

[48] *An Awakening Warning to the Wofull World* (Amsterdam, 1662), p. 41.

[49] *An Awakening Warning*, p. 25.

Considering repentance as a manifest sign of their imminent conversion, Serrarius rejoiced when hearing about fasting, praying and mourning among the Jews[50]. The great penitential revival caused by the appearance of the "Prophet" and the "Anointed King" was to him maybe the most important facet of the Sabbatean movement. This awakening, warmly applauded by him, served as an example to his impious fellow Christians.

As soon as the Jews would repent their rejection of Christ, God would bestow His mercy on them again. Their conversion to Christ would mean the end of their dispersion and their return to their ancient homeland: just as their disobedience had caused their dispersion, so their obedience would cause their gathering.

To his mind the calling of the Jews was closely linked with the fall of Babylon. It was one of Serrarius' main theses that immediately after the conversion of the Jews the divine judgement of their oppressors would take place. As soon as God would have bestowed mercy on His people, He would gird Himself to render vengeance on Babylon for her "Injustice, Pride, and all Oppression towards the miserable dispersed sheep of *Israel*"[51]. One is reminded of Menasseh's words that God would revenge the blood of Israel, that those who had wished the Jews evil would be punished by the just judgement of God[52]. Quoting various scriptural texts (Jer. 50:6, 7; Jer. 51:5; Joel 3:1-3; Lam. 4:22) Serrarius tried to prove that these two events, the conversion of the Jews and the "subversion" of Babylon, were closely joined together, the one following immediately after the other.

What was meant by "Babylon"? First and foremost those Christians who had oppressed and persecuted the Jews, imagining they acted rightly in revenging the sin that the Jews had committed against Christ. In passages reminding of La Peyrère, Robert Maton and Roger Williams, Serrarius levelled harsh criticism against his fellow Christians for their cruel treatment of the Jews[53]. The Christians had not been wiser than the Jews nor had they observed God's commandments more diligently, on the contrary, they had done worse than the Jews. Instead of bestowing mercy on them and trying to convince them of their unrighteousness by their own righteousness, the Christians had used no mercy against God's people but by their own unrighteousness had hardened the Jews in their iniquity. Moreover, fixing their eyes not upon themselves but upon the Jews, not seeing the beam in their own eyes but the mote that was in the Jews' eyes,

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[50] See, for example, his letter to Hartlib, 14 February 1662, in James Crossley (ed.), *The Diary and Correspondence of Dr. John Worthington*, Vol. II (1847), pp. 108-109.

[51] *An Awakening Warning*, p. 26.

[52] See *Miqweh Israel*, in Wolf, *Menasseh Ben Israel's Mission*, p. 53.

they had tried to justify themselves by considering in their minds that their deeds were a just punishment because the Jews had rejected Christ. So in raging against the Jews, they argued, one could not sin. They even persuaded themselves that in their afflicting, crucifying and killing of the Lord's people they did His work and rendered His vengeance (Joel 3:4). But once the Lord would do to the oppressors of the Jews as He formerly had done to His people: He would visit them, discovering their abominations. As they had exercised no mercy towards the Jews, so nobody would pity them. As they had done, so it would be requited to them, in the cup they had drunk to others, would it be drunk to them, even the double thereof (Rev. 18:6)[54].

From this passage it is clear that Serrarius was deeply indignant with those Christians who fancied that by oppressing the Jews they did a divine work. It was not to be denied that the Jews had sinned by rejecting Christ, but it was the Lord Himself Who had already punished them by having led them captive among all nations. Let no man presume to render God's vengeance by persecuting and killing the Jews, He did render His vengeance Himself and did not need any help from the Christians. Furthermore, Christ had not been crucified by the Jews alone, the gentiles were also involved in this crime. Moreover, it was absolutely improper to treat this nation cruelly, because it was the source of all benefits to the Christians. In their turn the oppressors of the Jews would also receive a divine punishment: Babylon would be destroyed for ever.

His vehement condemnation of the Christian ill-treatment of the Jews is an undeniable proof of his affection for the Jews – certainly when seen against the background of his time. His philo-Judaism goes hand in hand with a very critical view of the Christian attitude towards the Jews. It was no wonder, as the pointed out, that the latter cherished a deep aversion against Christianity.

However, not all Christians were to be blamed for persecuting the Jews: the oppressors of the Jews were to be found among the "false" Christians. Since the time the Jews were persecuted by Christians, true Christianity had apostatized. The Fourth Beast of Daniel, the "world", had not only trampled upon the Jews but also on the "true" Christians. Those Christians even committed violence in the name of God and Christ, calling their work "holy": a telling example was the so-called "Holy" Inquisition, an institution by which so much innocent blood had been shed in Portugal,

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[53] The tract by the millenarian Robert Maton, *Israel's Redemption* (London, 1642) was present in Serrarius' library. On his ideas and those of Roger Williams, see Katz, *Philo-Semitism*, pp. 100-101, 172, 186-187.

[54] *An Awakening Warning*, p. 27.

Spain and the Netherlands. Undoubtedly Serrarius had in mind his own family history as well as the sad stories of Jewish friends like Menasseh. So Jews and true Christians shared the same fate, both of them being oppressed by false Christians. Christ, His Apostles, and all true Christians were filled with compassion towards the Jews. Just like those early Christians the true Christians of the present – among whom Serrarius did not hesitate to reckon himself – were praying for the restoration of the Jews. Scripture showed that the deliverance from this terrible Beast of Daniel that kept both true Christians and Jews in his power would only happen when the latter would be delivered from their present captivity[55]. The conversion of the Jews, then, was a prerogative not only for the salvation of the Jews, but also of the true Christians.

Thus in a negative and a positive sense, both concerning their present suffering condition and their future salvation, Jews and true Christians – Menasseh and Serrarius – might be considered as brethren. Though he condemned the oppression of the Jews by the Christians, we have seen that their dispersion was regarded by Serrarius as a just punishment for their rejection of Jesus Christ as the Messiah. This was God's way of leading the Jews to the acknowledgement of the true Messiah. Through the tribulations and suffering the Jews had had to endure throughout the ages they would become humble, their hearts would soften so that they finally would accept Christ. This divine punishment, however, was not meant to last for ever: at one time God would bestow mercy again on His people and they would be restored to a glorious state. This future restoration was solely based upon God's faithfulness and grace and not on any merits or righteousness of the Jews themselves. Serrarius insisted that this restoration was the fulfillment of absolute divine promises, reminding of Menasseh's words that the hope of Israel, the hope for the coming of the Messiah, was "grounded upon the absolute Promise of the blessed God"[56].

If one believed in the general conversion of the Jews, then, Serrarius argued, one should also believe in the restoration of the Israelite kingdom, of the Jerusalem temple and of Levitical worship. Like La Peyrère, Homes, William Gouge, Felgenhauer and Jean Betison – to name some authors whose works he knew – he was convinced that at one time the Jews would inhabit Palestine again, the land that was promised to their forefathers as an everlasting inheritance. This promise would be fulfilled in the last days when the people of Israel, by the blood and Spirit of Christ, would be a holy people. Referring to a kabbalistical interpretation of Gen-

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[55] *Een Bleyde Boodschap*, pp. 17-18.

[56] *Apol. Resp.*, p. 17. See also Menasseh ben Israel, "To the Courteous Reader", in *Miqweh Israel* (Wolf, p. 7).

esis 15:18, 19, he tried to show that this promise to Abraham still had to be fulfilled, since those three nations of the Kenites, Kenizzites and Kadmonites had never been conquered by Israel up till then. It would only be fulfilled in the last times, as was to be inferred from that "kabbalistical treble" (*Cabalistae triplex*) of the names of those three nations (thrice P), that referred to the thrice "Kaddosh" ("Holy") in Isaiah 6:3, apparently implying that the promise in Genesis 15 would be fulfilled when the people of Israel was truly holy[57].

This kabbalistical argument Serrarius probably had heard of not from Menasseh, a great admirer of the kabbalah, but from the Jerusalem Rabbi Nathan Shapira who visited Amsterdam in 1656-1657 and was befriended by the millenarian. His interpretation of Genesis 15:18, 19, though slightly different, was known to Serrarius, who, in view of such kabbalistical notions, remarked that "though to us they are no ground of interpretation of Scripture; yet if to them [*i.e.*, the Jews] they bring forth true Gospel conclusions, we have no cause to except against their using of them"[58]. This however did not hinder him from using kabbalistical notions himself.

As we have seen, he believed that besides the dispersed Jews from the tribes of Juda and Benjamin the Lost Ten Tribes would also return to Palestine. The Twelve Tribes would live together again in the Holy Land. Just as God had delivered the Twelve Tribes from the bondage of Egypt, so He would deliver all of them from their present captivity. When it was said that "all Israel" would be saved, then the Ten Tribes were included. Moreover, various prophecies concerning the calling of the Jews and their return to Kanaan were addressed to the Twelve Tribes and not only to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Quoting the standard apocryphal text 4 Esdras 13, Serrarius tried to prove that those Lost Tribes, inhabiting a country where nobody had lived before, would appear at the end of days. In short, the restoration of Israel would not take place without the Ten Tribes being present.

It was no wonder that Serrarius anxiously awaited the reports out of the Near East concerning the return of the Ten Tribes, reports which reached Europe in September/October 1665, arriving more or less simultaneously with the rumors concerning Sabbatai Ṣevi and Nathan of Gaza. In view of these reports he published a work called "Exposition of the First Fourteen Chapters of the Book of Isaiah", that appeared in 1666[59]. In this commentary the theory about the Ten Tribes was expounded in full, con-

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[57] *Apol. Resp.*, pp. 14-15.

[58] See Serrarius' letter to Dury, April 1657, in *An Information concerning the Present State of the Jewish Nation in Europe and Judea* (London, 1658), p. 12.

[59] *Verklaringe over des Propheten Jesaia veertien eerste capittelen* (Amsterdam, 1666).

cluding that the return of the Ten Tribes was soon to happen. Like most millenarians he fixed his hope on 1666 as the year of the conversion of the Jews and the fall of Babylon.

Thus he brought the "noise of a multitude" (Isaiah 13:4) in connection with the rumors coming out of Barbary concerning the gathering of multitudes of Israelites who were said to be remnants of the Ten Tribes. He believed that parts of the Ten Tribes lived somewhere in Africa, for example on the coast of Guinee where, as he had heard, they did not mix with the other inhabitants nor had any commerce with them: in the night they brought merchandise to set places, in exchange for other necessaries which they wanted, but they were seen by none. Some of these had gone to America; whether by boat or by miracle was not known[60]. Another remnant of the Ten Tribes lived in Ethiopia, beyond the river Nile, witness Zephaniah 3:10. Others again were to be found on the other side of the river "Sabbathio" (=Sambatyon). This legendary river was believed to hold the Ten Tribes captive: it flowed during weekdays with strong currents carrying great stones so that no one could cross the river then. It rested however on Sabbath day but on this day it was forbidden to the Jews to travel. So indeed it was impossible to them to leave their place of exile. The Sambatyon legend had been given new life by Menasseh, who in is *Miqweh Israel* tried to prove the existence of this river; without doubt Serrarius knew this legend from this work[61].

Other Israelites were said to move through the Moroccan desert on their way to Assyria and Egypt where the Ten Tribes were believed to assemble. Serrarius rejoiced at hearing that some Israelites had been found in Arabia, sent by the Ten Tribes as their fore-runners. Some of these African Israelites were reported to have besieged Mecca[62]. Furthermore, the prophecy in Revelation 16:12, on the "great river Euphrates" of which the water would dry up "to prepare the way for the kings from the east", might, according to him, refer to the two tribes of Reuben and Gad and half of the tribe of Menasse, which had been led captive at another moment than the other tribes, living somewhere to the east of Jerusalem. They would be the first to arrive in the Holy Land. Some rumors about their journey towards Palestine had already spread[63].

All those reports, both about the Ten Tribes and about Sabbatai Ṣevi

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[60] *Verklaringe*, pp. 437, 438. See also his letter in *The Restauration of the Jews* (London, 1665), p. 3, in which the same story is related.

[61] *De Judaeorum Conversione*, p. 38. On the "Sabbaticall River", see Menasseh ben Israel, *Miqweh Israel*, in Wolf, pp. 35-38.

[62] See Serrarius' letter to Dury, October 1665, published in Scholem, *Sabbatai Ṣevi*, pp. 344-346.

[63] *Verklaringe*, pp. 442, 443.

and his prophet Nathan, were regarded by Serrarius as relating to Jeremiah 50:4, 5: "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten". "Shall this be?", Serrarius asked, "then necessarily they must come together, even before they know Christ, in a searching condition, and a mourning and weeping frame of spirit. And shall they come together? there must be a coming up of them by a more running Spirit, as we see those in Tartary, and those in Barbary, as well as those in Judea, stirred up by the Spirit of God; even as by the Spirit of Elijah, or John the Baptist, to prepare their hearts . . ."[64].

That the events of 1665/1666 were viewed seriously by him may also be apparent from the fact that he did not hesitate to compare the negative reaction of the "carnal" Christians to the accounts about Sabbatai Ṣevi and the Ten Tribes with the way in which the "carnal" Jews had received Christ. Those carnal Christians took exception to these accounts because they imagined Christ's second coming to happen in quite another way. For example, believing that the Ten Tribes had disappeared for good, having been mixed with other nations, and that the dispersed Jews were so divided as never to become united again, they could not accept the reports about the appearance of the Ten Tribes neither the news about the revivifying of the "dead bones of Judah". Furthermore, as they did not believe that there would appear a "prophet" or a "king" among the Jews before their conversion to Christianity, they thought it very strange to hear about a prophet and a king, in the same way as the Jews thought it strange to hear about Christ as the promised Messiah. Finally, those unregenerate Christians thought that the law had been abolished for ever and that the temple and the city of Jerusalem would never be restored. Thus, when learning about the rebuilding of the temple and of Jerusalem and the restoration of the law, they brought forth all sorts of arguments derived from Paul's letters to the Galatians, Collossians and Hebrews in order to refute this – just like the Jews employed arguments against Christ out of the *Books of Moses*.

Serrarius even seems to have made plans to leave Amsterdam for Palestine, arguing that from those who, like Israel, had been oppressed by Babylon and who wished to have part in the redemption of Israel, the same activity would be required as from the people of Israel: they had to come out of all corners of the world to go to the Holy Land. Those who wanted

[64] Roth, "New Light", p. 138.

to flee the judgements on Babylon should leave the sooner the better, even if one had to leave behind one's dearest friends. If the Apostles had lived nowadays, they would without doubt go with the weeping and mourning Jews to their land and patiently await Christ's revelation there[65]. He did not leave, however – probably being too old for such an undertaking – but it was told that he instigated a number of families to sell all their property in order to go to Palestine[66].

A special role was assigned by him to the Ten Tribes, once they would have assembled. Together with heirs of angels, the Ten Tribes would act as divine instruments to execute the judgement on their oppressors. They were the "sanctified ones" of the Lord (Isaiah 13:1-5), who, being chastized for a period of 2400 years, had become wholly obedient to God, a holy people, heroes, capable of judging sinners. It surely would be no human work, out of passion or ambition, but a divine one, in order to make everything subservient to God and the Lamb. It would be a work of divine revenge, for Zion's sake. Only God's will would be performed[67].

Like Menasseh who believed that in the Fifth Monarchy a number of Christians would rule together with the Jews, so according to Serrarius the converted Jews, with the true Christians, would be the kings and saints in Christ's millennial kingdom. The whole world would be obedient to them. Their oppressors had received their judgement, others would be their servants. In this way "the world would be turned upside down". Babylon had fallen for ever; Zion was restored, the everlasting center of the universe.

In this Zion Christ would reign over the world, seated on the throne of David. Then "the increase of his government" (Isaiah 9:7) would be manifest upon earth as an external, visible kingdom, a government over all Twelve Tribes of Israel. Like Menasseh in his *Miqweh Israel*, Serrarius observed that there was a mystery contained in the "m" of the Hebrew word "increase", למרבה, which mem was such an "m" that was written only at the end of words. Against common practice it was put here in the middle of the word. There were different opinions about the meaning of this mystery, Serrarius said, himself ranking among those who were of the opinion that the increase of this government at first would be a hidden affair, quoting Jesus' words in Luke 17:20, 21, that one could not tell by observation when the kingdom of God would come, "for in fact the kingdom of God is among you". As if Christ said: it is a close "m", a matter that will proceed among you but will not be acknowledged by you, Pharisees,

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[65] See his Preface to the *Verklaringe*.

[66] This was related by Antoinette Bourignon, who quarreled with Serrarius about his ideas concerning the return of the Jews to the Holy Land.

[67] *Verklaringe*, pp. 470-476.

because it does not come with an external gesture as you expect, but with an internal spiritual strength. There will be no saying "Look, here it is!", or "there it is!", but this kingdom will be founded in the heart of man. Thus, according to Serrarius, the increase of this government was for some time a matter hidden to all carnal and worldly Jews and gentiles, while known to all faithful Jews and non-Jews. The time would come, however, when this increase would be revealed to the whole nation of Israel and to the whole world. In this explanation he differed from Menasseh. By the latter this mystery was interpreted as referring to the impossibility of knowing the exact time of the return of Israel to their country. From this "m", Menasseh said, it was apparent that "the time of the Fifth Monarchy shall be hid, till the time when it shall begin"[68].

The *restoratio regni Israelis* did not only mean the glorious restoration of the Jews, its meaning was much wider in scope. This restoration would be of universal importance: it was the *restitutio omnium*, all humanity and all nature would be renewed (Acts 3:21). The Spirit of the Lord would be poured out not only on the Jews, but also on mankind as a whole as well as on all creatures. All would live in harmony, the earth would be covered by knowledge of the Lord "as waters by the sea". It would be the great Sabbath, the *Sabbat Sabbathum*, for the whole earth. Seen against this background, it is no surprise that Serrarius was so keen on signs that pointed to the restoration of Israel.

Menasseh did not live to see the excitement about the Ten Tribes, in which his own ideas played such an important part, witness also the fact that the Dutch translation of his *Miqweh Israel* was reprinted twice in 1666. He died, seemingly without having successfully finished his mission to England, in November 1657. Serrarius was prepared by his discussions with Menasseh to interpret the events of 1665 and 1666 in the same light as the latter would have done. When those years went by without the general conversion of the Jews and the fall of Babylon, he probably was somewhat disappointed too, though he had also fixed his hope on the year 1670. He died however before this date, in September 1669.

Menasseh ben Israel and Petrus Serrarius, the Jewish rabbi and the Christian millenarian, both believed that the messianic age was dawning. Their source of inspiration was the expectation of the advent of the Messiah whose appearance would mark the final redemption. It was this expectation by which Menasseh was led to go to England, hoping that by the resettlement of the Jews in this country one of the last promises before the coming of the Messiah would be fulfilled. Serrarius spread the good mes-

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[68] *Verklaringe*, pp. 313-314; and *Miqweh Israel*, in Wolf, p. 45.

sage of Israel's imminent redemption through his writings and tried to further this by charity and love towards the Jews. For him, as a Christian, the acknowledgement of Christ by the Jews was the fundamental precondition for their glorious restoration, but he did not doubt, on the ground of God's absolute promise, that they would ever be restored. His philo-Judaism is reflected in his idea that Christian anti-millenarianism was just about the same as Jewish anti-Christianism, furthermore in his severe attack on Christian ill-treatment of the Jews; his belief in their glorious restoration; and in his conviction that *charitas practica* was the best means to their conversion. As to the theory about the Lost Ten Tribes which played such an important part in seventeenth-century messianism, in this as in other matters Serrarius was undoubtedly influenced by Menasseh's views. Of fundamental importance to his philo-Judaism were his mystic spiritualistic concepts, for example his notion about the apostasy of the Christian church and the idea of a future harmonious internal and external religion. Though he gave no sources for his views, some of his philo-Judaistic notions show a close affinity to those of that other well-known philo-Judaistic millenarian, La Peyrère, who was also the source of inspiration for Felgenhauer, Vieira, and Menasseh. The Jewish rabbi and his Christian millenarian friends were all living in the "miqweh Israel", the hope of the assembling and restoration of the Jews. There was a kind of brotherhood between them. With Menasseh and the others, Serrarius was indeed, as he called himself, a "Fellow-waiter in the Redemption of Israel, and of all mankind".